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# Sport and social relationships in the Falkland Islands up to 1982<sup>1</sup>

Matthew L. McDowell

University of Edinburgh

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## Abstract

This article uses sport as a means of examining aspects of social relationships amongst Falkland Islanders up to 1982's Falklands War. This examination – researched primarily via archival, newspaper, and interview evidence – is accomplished via four routes. Firstly, rifle shooting, including the territorial Falkland Islands Defence Force (FIDF)'s annual participation in the National Rifle Association (NRA)'s imperial tournaments, is used to examine the application of popular imperialism and gubernatorial power within Falklands society. Horse racing and other agricultural-based sports are used to display how sport was used as a means of displaying occupation prowess, in the context of a paternalistic farming (mono)culture created and managed by the absentee landlords of the Falkland Islands Company (FIC). Third: badminton's popularity, primarily in the capital, Stanley, is applied towards examining the social lives of women, including amongst its British-born community. Finally, football – whose English clubs were well-followed by Falklands men over the BBC Empire/World Service – is used to elucidate aspects of Islanders' relationships with their South American neighbours, including Argentina, which continually claimed sovereignty over the Falklands. This article makes the case that sports culture in the Falklands was both reflective of greater trends in British imperial culture, whilst also containing peculiarities relating to its location, demographics, and unusual political status.

## Introduction

In the years leading up to the events of 1982's Falklands War, British journalists noted that for all of their issues, Falkland Islanders really loved sport. Sport certainly featured in Ian Jack's account of the South Atlantic archipelago for *The Sunday Times* in 1978, a period where the UK Government was actively seeking transfer of the Islands – referred to

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that "the Falkland Islands," along with English-language place names within the Islands, are used in this article, except when referring explicitly to Argentinean perspectives. This is to reflect the names given to places and institutions by people resident in the Islands.

throughout most of the Hispanophone world as *las Islas Malvinas* – to Argentina, which continued to claim them. Jack believed that the Darwin Harbour Sports – an event which took place at the end of sheep-shearing season in late February and featured horse-racing, steer-riding, athletic races, and a variety of other disciplines, being held that year at the East Falkland farm settlement of Goose Green – could be viewed as a lovely sight for those of ‘lingering notions of Imperial romance’, particularly in contrast to the decline of Empire and a problematic future. ‘Here’, Jack stated, ‘in one of our last colonies, are weather-beaten sons and daughters of the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic races hard at play.’ This quaint picture, however, was juxtaposed with a different one: of a colonial company-as-absentee landlord, an uneven gender ratio (which, in the Falklands, roughly numbered two men for every woman), emigration, and an unsettling future with Argentina, then governed by a right-wing military dictatorship.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the BBC’s Latin America correspondent Harold Briley, in a March 1982 report for Radio 4, noted the gender ratio (along with a high divorce rate), and additionally stated that alcoholism was an issue. But he also noted positives: a society that listened a great deal to the radio, and a ‘community [which] indulges vigorously in outdoor sports...’<sup>3</sup> Events shortly after Briley’s report, however, would soon render any discussion of sport redundant. Sport is not the first thing a UK reader imagines when thinking of the archipelago, which has, for better or worse, taken on an outsized meaning about Britain’s place in the post-Second World War order, a narrative which has often transcended any discussion of the everyday lives of the people living there, particularly before 1982. To that end this article uses sport and outdoor leisure as a means of interrogating social relationships within the Falkland Islands, and amongst Falkland Islanders, before the 1982

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<sup>2</sup> Ian Jack, “Don’t cry for us Argentina,” *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 13 August 1978, 14-28.

<sup>3</sup> Pinkerton, “The Falklands Conflict as a Radio War,” 346.

conflict: how sport was reflective of national identity and popular imperialism (and power) in the Falklands, how it reflected the patterns and hierarchy of agricultural life, how it fit into the leisure lives of women, and how sport was reflective of popular understandings of geopolitics.

Sport, in and of itself, may not be any more or less culturally significant than other leisure activities which took place on the Falkland Islands previous to 1982, but as with Jack's and Briley's (and others') accounts, it is noteworthy how often sport, and the Falklands' own particular variations on British/Irish and Americas frontier sporting cultures were noted by outsiders. Indeed, sport was, and continues to be the focal point for significant days on the social calendar of the Islands' capital, Stanley, as well as the Falklands countryside, collectively referred to as Camp (a variation on the Spanish *campo*). Aside from the social significance of sport, there is also its geographical significance in terms of how it intersects with memory. Matthew Benwell states that young Falkland Islanders' everyday geography interacts considerably with that of a War and occupation known by their parents: one of his examples includes a host of leisure activities involving schoolchildren hosted on Tumbledown, the hill overlooking Stanley where some of the fiercest fighting took place.<sup>4</sup> On a similar note, it is crucial to consider how much of the geography of the 1982 War interacted with that of elements of everyday life such as sport. During what Falkland Islanders humorously (at least, initially) referred to as Argentina's first 'invasion' of the Falklands, the hijacking of an Aerolíneas Argentinas passenger flight on 28 September 1966 by nationalist extremists (in an ill-fated attempt to force a VIP passenger, the Governor of

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<sup>4</sup> Benwell, "Encountering geopolitical pasts in the present," 121-33.

Tierra del Fuego province, to verbally declare Argentinean sovereignty over the Falklands), an emergency landing took place on Stanley Racecourse.<sup>5</sup> During the 1982 War itself, the Racecourse, the site of Stanley's annual Christmas Sports, would be used by Argentinean soldiers as a fuel depot and ammunition dump, and would sustain heavy damage.<sup>6</sup> Stanley's gymnasium, which typically housed badminton, darts, and other sports was occupied by Argentinean soldiers as a barracks, while the recreation hall at Goose Green, where indoor sports took place, housed imprisoned residents during the British military's siege of what had become a crucial Argentinean fortification.<sup>7</sup> Recognisable personnel from the War doubled as prominent people in Falklands sport, most notably Patrick Watts, footballer, football team manager, and future chair of the Falkland Islands Overseas Games Association (FIOGA) and leader of many missions to the Commonwealth and Island Games. Watts, broadcaster and manager of the Falkland Islands Broadcasting Service (FIBS), is famous in the UK for manning the controls at FIBS' Stanley office while the Argentinean invasion was taking place.<sup>8</sup> The War even colours seemingly typical, banal occurrences within the Falklands sporting calendar with an extra layer of meaning: the *Penguin News* newspaper, a few months before the invasion in January 1982, showed a photograph of Governor Rex Hunt running in the veterans' athletic race at the previous month's Christmas Sports in Stanley.<sup>9</sup> At the beginning of April, Hunt's official residence at Government House would be under siege from Argentinean soldiers, and he would be deported shortly afterwards

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<sup>5</sup> *Falkland Islands Monthly Review* (henceforth *FIMR*), 3 October 1966.

<sup>6</sup> Watts, *The Christmas Sports*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Bound, *Falkland Islanders at War*.

<sup>8</sup> Pinkerton, "The Falklands Conflict as a Radio War," 344-75.

<sup>9</sup> *Penguin News* (henceforth *PN*), 18 January 1982.

(returning only after the War had ended).<sup>10</sup> (Sport makes it into the fringes of Hunt's memoir on his years as Governor of the Falklands.<sup>11</sup>) The Falkland Islands would compete in the 1982 and 1990 Commonwealth Games (the former weeks after the end of the War), and regularly afterwards, along with the Island Games from 1993.

It is worth examining the sport culture which existed in the Falkland Islands before the War and Argentinean occupation separately; after 1982, sport was far more regimented and informed by professional technique and qualifications, and reflected demographic changes in Falklands society, including a large permanent military presence on the Islands. This included the opening of the Islands' first pool in 1989. Sarah Allan (née Dixon), originally from Northumberland but already working in the Falklands as a travelling teacher, was appointed as a physical education teacher at Stanley's senior and infant/junior schools in 1989, the first PE teacher permanently employed in the Islands. She recalls that she spent two years building a PE programme and setting standards, in part because many of the secondary children had no expectation of how to behave in a PE class. She was also hired in part because a swimming teacher/coach was required: Stanley may have had a new pool, but very few people in the Falkland Islands had ever previously learned to swim, other than those who learned on board *Coastells*' (floating accommodation brought in to accommodate the military) after the 1982 conflict.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bound, *Falkland Islanders at War*.

<sup>11</sup> Hunt, *My Falkland Days*.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Sarah Allan, Stocksfield, Northumberland, 14 February 2018.

In academic literature, little has been written on the social and cultural history of the Falkland Islands, at least in comparison to the writings generated by the War itself. Elements of the Falklands' pre-1982 social history have made their way into Klaus Dodds' 2002 book on the historical geopolitics of what is often referred to as Britain's 'South Atlantic empire,' which includes the Falklands, St. Helena, Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and crucially Antarctic territory claimed by the UK. (British and Argentinean claims continue to overlap in the Falklands, South Georgia, and Antarctica.)<sup>13</sup> Alasdair Pinkerton also examined the place of radio in the lives of Falkland Islanders, but with the War providing the main backdrop for doing so.<sup>14</sup> In his otherwise thorough 1990 PhD thesis on the creation of the post-1945 'Falklands lobby' in and around the UK Parliament (particularly during the fraught 1970s), Clive Ellerby – whose research was based mostly in and around London – bemoaned the lack of primary material available to write extensively about the social history of Falkland Islands. While Ellerby's research is able to successfully convey some element of the pre-1982 *economic* and *political* history of the Islands (even if it is arguably not the main focus), the twenty-first century historian nevertheless has digital tools available at their disposal to better facilitate the task of performing primary research on the Falklands' social and cultural history, and to help overcome some of the logistical hurdles involved.<sup>15</sup> For this article, archival research was performed in Stanley at the Jane Cameron National Archives and in a personal archive during December 2017, and a series of interviews were performed in Stanley and Northumberland from December 2017 to February 2018 (along with email correspondence

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<sup>13</sup> Dodds, *Pink Ice*.

<sup>14</sup> Pinkerton, "The Falklands Conflict as a Radio War."

<sup>15</sup> Ellerby, "British interests."

interviews), four of which are used in this article. All interviewees have consented to allow their names to be used; the author maintains possession of the interview transcripts, which are not publicly available.<sup>16</sup> (The Falklands-based research is part of a much larger project examining the history of the Island Games, and sporting culture and policy in its constituent polities.) This article also uses publicly available digitized newspaper/periodical archives on the website of the Jane Cameron National Archives, which allow access at a distance to the infrequent, irregular, and idiosyncratic coverage of sport in the Falkland Islands.

Newspapers were the visions of different authors and perspectives, and were often financially un-viable and short-lived: the *Falkland Islands Magazine*, started in 1889, and the *Falkland Islands Weekly News and Church Bulletin* (1938-43), were based within the auspices of the Anglican Church, while *Falkland Islands Monthly Review*, first printed in 1949, was initially published by the Colonial Secretary, Denton Thompson. Stanley's current weekly newspaper, the *Penguin News*, has existed since 1979: while started by editor Graham Bound, the newspaper was co-opted into the Media Trust, a fund run by the Falkland Islands Government (FIG), in 1989.<sup>17</sup>

### ***The cultural utility of rifle sport***

Volunteerism and citizen soldiery were not the very first providers of recreation, but for many years the Falkland Islands' Volunteer corps and its more corporate successor, the Falkland Islands Defence Force (FIDF) (founded in 1919) were perhaps the main providers of

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<sup>16</sup> This article is part of a wider project examining the history of the Island Games; thus, sport in the post-1982 Falkland Islands will be discussed in another article.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Cameron National Archives. <https://www.fig.gov.fk/archives/online-collections>.



sport on the Islands.<sup>18</sup> The Volunteer movement, of course, was highly relevant as a provider of sport within the UK as well, so much so that by the twentieth century much of the original rhetoric of Volunteerism's role in providing an alternative to conscription had been tamed by its unintended success as a vehicle for working-class leisure.<sup>19</sup> The first Volunteer force on the Falklands was formed in 1854; as in the UK, this was in response to the outbreak of the Crimean War. However, a more permanent armed body of 37 soldiers, the Falkland Islands Volunteers, was created in 1892 in response to the landing of a Chilean steamer *Maipo* with two hundred soldiers aboard it the year before, ostensibly in the Falklands for repairs during the country's civil war.<sup>20</sup> Security was not the only reason given for the starting the corps, however: TH Rowell, captain of the Falkland Islands Volunteers, in a May 1893 letter to the *Falkland Islands Magazine* reiterated the landing of the *Maipo* and insufficient police coverage as a reason for raising the company. However, he also asked:

...can it be denied that it is doing good work among the young men of the place, causing them to fraternise more together, and possibly prove a counter attraction to something else that might not do them so much good as sound physical exercise.<sup>21</sup>

So, even in its infancy, Falklands Volunteerism linked its geopolitics towards a more pragmatic community application; a 1902 report on the Volunteers stated that a recreation room and canteen was recently established. More to the point, however, the now 97

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<sup>18</sup> A short organizational history of the FIDF exists on a now-defunct web page: Major Peter Biggs, "Falkland Islands Defence Force: 150 years of Voluntary Service," <https://web.archive.org/web/20060427094356/http://www.falklands.info/history/histarticle24.html>, accessed 21 August 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force*; Jackson, "Patriotism or Pleasure?"

<sup>20</sup> Biggs, "Falkland Islands Defence Force," <https://web.archive.org/web/20060427094356/http://www.falklands.info/history/histarticle24.html>, accessed 21 August 2018.

<sup>21</sup> *Falkland Islands Magazine* (henceforth *FIM*), May 1893.

members were provided by the War Office with Lee-Enfield rifles to replace their older Martini-Henry ones.<sup>22</sup> Rifle shooting, as a sport and as an activity, had a long history in the Falklands. The formation of the Stanley Rifle Club pre-dated the Falkland Islands Volunteers by seven years, and had regular competitions against whichever Royal Navy ships had come into port at Stanley.<sup>23</sup> Season 1888-89, for instance, featured four competitions: against HMS *Swallow*, HMS *Ruby*, HMS *Rifleman*, and HMS *Flamingo*.<sup>24</sup> One did not have to be in the Volunteers to obtain a rifle or ammunition: at the outset of the Second South African War in 1900, one could easily buy cartridges for their Winchester rifles at the Globe Store in Stanley.<sup>25</sup> RM Routledge, then Stipendiary Justice of Trinidad, when speaking to the Society of Aberdeen in March 1896, noted regarding his recent visit that ‘if there is one thing more than another in which the Falklander excels, it is in piling on the “bull’s eye” at the rifle-range’.<sup>26</sup>

After the First World War, however – when Falklands Volunteers acted as sights on top of Sapper Hill, overlooking Stanley, for the British naval victory at the Falkland Islands over Germany on 8 December 1914 – it would be membership in the new FIDF that would offer the Islands’ men an additional incentive which competition against ships docked locally could not: a shot at beating the best riflemen in the British Empire. The FIDF’s rifle association itself was founded in 1928.<sup>27</sup> Whilst the competitions against naval ships would

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<sup>22</sup> *FIM*, May 1902.

<sup>23</sup> *FIM*, May 1889; *FIM*, July 1890; *FIM*, November 1902.

<sup>24</sup> *FIM*, May 1889.

<sup>25</sup> *FIM*, January 1900.

<sup>26</sup> RM Routledge, “The Falkland Islands,” *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 12, no. 5 (1896): 241-52.

<sup>27</sup> *Falkland Islands Monthly Review* (henceforth *FIMR*), 1 March 1965.

continue in Stanley, the imperial meeting of the National Rifle Association (NRA), held annually at Bisley, in Surrey, was also typically attended by men from the FIDF, who participated in the team events the Junior Kolapore and Junior Overseas Cups, and the individual Junior Mackinnon and Nobel Cups.<sup>28</sup> 'Junior' events did not refer to the age of competitors, but to events that were designed specifically for the other dominions of the British Empire; as some of these dominions gained independence from the UK, the likes of the USA, West Germany, and Belgium were later allowed into the 'junior' competitions by the NRA, in part to keep the tournaments viable.<sup>29</sup> 'Bisley', aside from Stanley's and Camp's horse races (which will be discussed in the next section), was a major date on the Falkland sporting calendar, so much so that the Falkland Islands national rifle championship – which typically determined who went to the NRA championships – was referred to as the 'Local Bisley'. The *Falkland Islands Monthly Review* in March 1965, when discussing February's Local Bisley meeting, noted that rifle shooting was 'the only field in which the Colony competes in "international class"'.<sup>30</sup> In celebration of the Falklands' teams' achievements in the 1980 NRA meeting, where Falkland Islanders won the Junior Mackinnon and Nobel Cups, the *Penguin News* toasted 'our heroes of 1980', along with noting the support of former military officers now in charge of the NRA adjudged to have given the Falklands team invaluable support. The writer of this piece, noted by editor Graham Bound to have likely been one of the winning team, stated the deep connection riflemen had with 'the typical Bisley atmosphere: friendly cheerfulness with a sense of sportsmanship unequalled in most

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<sup>28</sup> *Penguin News* (henceforth *PN*), 25 September 1980.

<sup>29</sup> *PN*, 23 October 1980.

<sup>30</sup> *FIMR*, 1 March 1965

sports'.<sup>31</sup> Two rifle shooters comprised the entire 1982 Falkland Islands Commonwealth Games team.

It is difficult to examine the Falkland Islands at Bisley without viewing it through the lens of popular imperialism more broadly. There is, of course, a great deal of academic literature about how the Falkland Islands fit into the national(ist) mythology of the post-1982 United Kingdom, and how the Falklands War helped colour how the British public viewed the history of the UK and its empire.<sup>32</sup> In part, this was initially driven by the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, which prosecuted the 1982 campaign against Argentina at great financial and human cost. With a living example from the 1980s of 'popular imperialism' now being presented, the conflict would be the spur for new publications which examined the history of the subject.<sup>33</sup> Much less has been discussed on popular imperialism within the pre-1982 Falklands themselves. Dodds states that, in a 1948 petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to have Governor Miles Clifford removed for nepotism and overseeing a bloated bureaucracy, some Falkland Islanders made explicit reference to their 'loyalty' to the monarchy: a demand for more representative government couched in language that was explicitly and paradoxically coded to counter the anti-colonial mood of the period, but would later be recycled in the run-up to and the aftermath of the 1982 campaign.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *PN*, 25 September 1980.

<sup>32</sup> Hewer, "The Falklands/Malvinas dispute," 144-50.

<sup>33</sup> MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture*.

<sup>34</sup> Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 118-41.

Analysing the history of rifle shooting on the Islands allows a further opportunity to examine such phenomena. By the very nature of the 1833 creation of the permanent colony, in which the few remaining Spanish settlers were expelled, precipitating the stationing of a permanent British Army garrison from 1834 onwards, some kind of militarism would inevitably form an element of cultural life in the Falklands. This included the British settlers themselves: in 1849, a group of thirty Chelsea Pensioners and their families arrived in and initiated the settlement of Stanley (seven returned to the UK).<sup>35</sup> Certainly, the Falklands' participation in rifle shooting was viewed in the context of imperialism. It was the Colonial Defence Committee who, in 1908, first recommended that the Falklands' volunteers take part in the Bisley tournament to encourage shooting skills. British military officials saw the Falklands as crucial because of both their proximity to Cape Horn, Antarctica, and (at a further distance) South Africa.<sup>36</sup> Around this period, in British colonies with very different social situations – for instance, Barbados – rifle clubs were started as a means of combating perceived crises in 'manliness'.<sup>37</sup> The timing was important. A 1911 feature in the *Pall Mall Magazine* by Frederic W. Walker on British marksmanship linked firearms directly to the strength of the British Empire, stating: 'The British Empire owes its foundation to the skill of our men-at-arms in past ages.' However, Walker was also concerned about the result of the Second South African War, where soldiers were deemed to have been deficient – both in terms of their physicality and their practice – with the NRA's 1899 founding and its accompanying rifle competitions fortuitously coinciding to meet this need. Rifle competitions

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<sup>35</sup> Royle, "The Falkland Islands, 1833-1876."

<sup>36</sup> Ellerby, "British interests," 46-56.

<sup>37</sup> Downes, "Cricket and Masculinity in the Caribbean," 10.

and regular clubs here were seen to play their part in re-establishing this tradition, and this included Britain's South Atlantic empire:

These clubs, miniature, and long range, are mainly in the Homeland, but the Oversea nations have representation also. The Western prairie has its membership; and away as far as the Antarctic fringe and in the Falkland Islands are men who wear the Bisley skill badges, of which thousands have been won. At Alexandria there is a club, and down through the African continent we touch clubs at Cairo, Atbara, Khartoum, Rhodesia and Transvaal, and so on to the shores of the southern coast. In burning Aden, too, the movement is represented, and from Bombay, the Kolar Goldfields, and other parts of India, China, the Gold Coast, Newfoundland, the Straits Settlements and the West Indies there are riflemen the product of those patriotic meetings in 1899. They and the military riflemen girdle the world and stretch from without the Arctic Circle to the frozen South.<sup>38</sup>

The nuances of how this tradition was celebrated within the Falklands could be seen at victory celebrations for successful Bisley teams. This was especially the case for the successful 1930 Junior Kolapore Cup team of captain Al Fleuret, JR Gleadell, and Mark Campbell. After their long trip back from England, the team was due to arrive in Stanley Harbour on the morning of 14 October: for the occasion, all Falkland Islands Government (FIG) offices were closed, and schoolchildren given the day off. *The Penguin* newspaper requested householders to display bunting, and for other vessels in Stanley Harbour to sound their sirens and bells.<sup>39</sup> There was also to be a fireworks display for that evening.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Frederic W. Walker, 'British Marksmanship', *Pall Mall Magazine*, August 1911, 226-35.

<sup>39</sup> *The Penguin* (henceforth *TP*), 11 October 1930.

<sup>40</sup> *TP*, 14 October 1930.

The riflemen were met at their boat by the Governor, Arnold Hodson, along with LWH Young, manager of the Falkland Islands Company (FIC), and JI Moir, the commanding officer of the FIDF, before disembarking on Stanley's jetty. It was a riot of sight and sound, according to *The Penguin*:

Everywhere flags were hoisted and fluttered proudly in the breeze; Government House, houses and offices, works and stores were bedecked with a kaleidoscope of colour while at the Colonial Secretary's Office flew the signals 'Welcome' and 'Well Done'... Thicker and thicker became the crowd and longer and longer it stretched towards the Cathedral. All the school-children were there. Flags were grasped firmly in their hands; their eyes were round and large with their tightly pressed lips vehement with hurrahs for the home-comers when they passed by... The strains of bag-pipes, played by Mr D McPhee, broke the expectant silence as *The Penguin* approached the Jetty and as the launch drew along-side a resounding cheer rent the air, echoing the whole length of the packed platform to be taken up by the throng along Ross Road. *The Penguin* which had already saluted the Team with six short blasts from her siren as she approached the *Crita* to receive them, accorded them a similar honour as Mr Al Fleuret, with a modest but happy smile, jumped ashore.<sup>41</sup>

The next day, on 15 October, the FIDF organised a dance at Stanley's Town Hall with many of the same Colonial personnel (and their wives and families), members of the FIDF, and many others, two bands played music for dancing while 'on the stage were arranged two tables covered with the Union Jack'.<sup>42</sup> When a Falklands team featuring Fleuret, Gleadell,

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<sup>41</sup> *TP*, 15 October 1930.

<sup>42</sup> *TP*, 18 October 1930.

and Len Reive once again won the Junior Kolapore Cup in 1934, the September party for the team had them '[drinking] to their success from the spacious bowl of the trophy'.<sup>43</sup>

The colonial Governor was a conspicuous presence at many sporting events, but this was especially the case for rifle sport. Diplomats and administrators in the imperial civil service were typically privately educated and immersed in the cult of 'athleticism'.<sup>44</sup> However, as the late Anthony Kirk-Greene states, Governors and other top colonial officials were also noted by their subjects as being overly preoccupied with sporting activities, and Governors often provided patronage and interest in sport as a means of intentionally reproducing class expectations of what an imperial administrator should be.<sup>45</sup> Twentieth-century Governors of the Falkland Islands, until the Argentinean occupation, were far more powerful individuals than was typically the case of Governors-General in other so-called 'white' dominions who had gained full independence by the Second World War. Until 1945, there was no representative government in the Falklands, and the Governor possessed almost autocratic powers, if shared through an unelected Legislative Council typically comprised of directors of the royal-chartered Falkland Islands Company (FIC), which owned most of the Islands' sheep farms.<sup>46</sup> The aforementioned 1948 crisis, which culminated in Clifford retiring due to 'ill health', saw the Legislative Council gaining four popularly elected seats, still part of a twelve-person Council which included the Colonial Secretary, the Senior Medical Officer, and the Agricultural Officer.<sup>47</sup> Governors, up to 1982, were unquestionably the dominant

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<sup>43</sup> *TP*, 17 September 1934.

<sup>44</sup> Mangan, *Athleticism*.

<sup>45</sup> Kirk-Greene, "His Excellency"

<sup>46</sup> Ellerby, "British interests," 33-38

<sup>47</sup> Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 118-41.



figures in colonial Government. Hodson, Governor from 1927 to 1931, was particularly notable for his love of sport.<sup>48</sup> In 1912, he wrote a book about his exploits hunting game and speaking with different ethnic groups to gain knowledge of hunting in the Kalahari Desert while serving as a police official in Bechuanaland (now Botswana), very much part of a genre that emphasised a concerted attempt to construct an authentic 'British' masculinity.<sup>49</sup> A 1980 article in the *Penguin News* gave Hodson credit for founding the FIDF's rifle club in 1927, and in later years he would be a vice president of the NRA.<sup>50</sup> He was often at the centre of FIDF rifle activities: in January 1930, he presented a silver ink stand to be won at a 900- and 1,000-yard distance.<sup>51</sup> A month later, as the team prepared for Bisley, one practice round at the Sapper Hill range was 'being coached personally by His Excellency the Governor who is kindly providing tea for the team at the Range'.<sup>52</sup> Hodson was forthright that the FIG's financial support to build new ranges was all the payment they would receive, and that members would need to raise funds to travel to Bisley, as he viewed such funding as a form a breach of amateur sporting. Indeed, when the team won at Bisley that same year, Hodson discussed his reasons for his support of the FIDF, and they seemingly echoed words that might be heard in the hallways of many a British educational institution on the value of a constructed self-reliance:

You all know that in our scheme of Empire Defence each Colony is expected to pull its weight and do its share, and this is only right and fair when we take into consideration the fact that we, in this Colony, do not pay sixpence either directly or

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<sup>48</sup> Headland, "Sir Arnold Wienholt Hodson."

<sup>49</sup> Hodson, *Trekking the Great Thirst*; Thompsell, *Hunting Africa*.

<sup>50</sup> *PN*, 23 October 1980; Kirk-Greene, "His Excellency," 228.

<sup>51</sup> *TP*, 11 January 1930

<sup>52</sup> *TP*, 15 February 1930.

indirectly, towards the cost of the Royal Navy. We therefore have our Defence Force. Now for the members of this Force to be any use in war, and especially the kind of warfare we should have out here, must be good shots, if they fail in this they are simply an encumbrance and might as well not be soldiers at all. In fact I would rather have in action fifty first class shots than three hundred men who do not know how to use a rifle as it should be used.<sup>53</sup>

Hodson was not the last Falklands Governor to openly suggest what the purpose of sport should be. His successor, James O'Grady, was from a far different background: originally from Bristol and of Irish parentage, he was a former trade unionist who served as a Labour MP from 1906 to 1924.<sup>54</sup> Upon his departure for the Falklands in May 1931, the *Nottingham Evening Post* noted O'Grady was bringing a crate of boxing gloves to Stanley in the hopes of spurring interest in his personal favourite sport.<sup>55</sup> (Boxing was sporadically popular at different periods amongst boys in the Falklands.<sup>56</sup>) Thirty years later, in March 1961, Edwin Arrowsmith was more typically seen handing out prizes for a shoot earlier in the month between active FIDF members, retired ones, and Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel. With a resounding victory for retirees, Arrowsmith believed that the competition was unfair, due to their 'knowledge of local shooting conditions'. 'His idea', the *Falkland Islands Monthly Review* stated, 'was to turn the competition into a pentathlon, in order to give the other teams a greater chance of winning'.<sup>57</sup> For all one-sided debate about what the purpose of FIDF rifle sports were, in a territory whose sovereignty had long been disputed

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<sup>53</sup> TP, 18 October 1930.

<sup>54</sup> Giles, "Sir James O'Grady."

<sup>55</sup> *Nottingham Evening Post*, 22 May 1931.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Patrick Watts, Stanley, 7 December 2017.

<sup>57</sup> *FIMR*, 7 April 1961.

by a neighbour, the threat of an *Argentinean* invasion, at least publicly, came up very little as a reason for participation in rifle tournaments. The FIDF were perceived locally to have been important in managing to contain the 1966 hijacking drama on the Stanley Racecourse. On the morning of 2 April 1982, however, when Argentina invaded the Falklands, members of the FIDF were ordered by Governor Rex Hunt to guard key buildings in Stanley, but ultimately did not fire a shot and were disarmed by the Argentineans in their Drill Hall, whilst the company of 57 Royal Marines slowed the taking of Government House.<sup>58</sup> Recreation might not have been the only purpose of the FIDF, but it was enough of a significant element for Hunt to ultimately trust professional soldiers to defend the seat of government once the real work of war arrived on the shores of the Falklands.

### ***The cultural prominence of agricultural sport***

Given the historic dominance of the wool economy in the Falkland Islands, it is logical that the Islands' other major sporting institutions existed within the confines of agriculture. (Rifle shooting, however, had considerable utility in farming. Brian Aldridge, a farmer who grew up in Hill Cove, West Falkland in the 1960s, and would move to Goose Green in 1981 and later manage the estate, recalled shooting birds with an air rifle when he was about six years old, and shortly afterwards being able to shoot geese with a .22 rifle.<sup>59</sup>) The Falklands' major annual horse racing meetings certainly formed a significant part of the pre-1982 external journalistic treatments of the Islands. Aside from Jack's piece in *The Sunday Times*, this included Olin Sewall Pettingill Jr's account of the 'people and penguins of the Faraway Falklands' in a 1956 article in *National Geographic Magazine*: put together while assisting

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<sup>58</sup> Bound, *Falkland Islanders at War*, 18-63.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Brian Aldridge, Stanley, 5 December 2017.

with filming for the Disney documentary *Islands of the Sea* (1960). Pettingill also took note (with pictures) of Stanley's Christmas Sports, a 'two-day gymkhana' whose major event was the Governor's Cup, 'a small-scale version of the Irish Sweepstakes'.<sup>60</sup> West Falkland's Sports week even received a brief mention in a 1978 *Sports Illustrated* article by Clive Gammon, who travelled from the UK to Camp for the purposes of trout fishing.<sup>61</sup> These meetings are considered unique Falklands institutions: in Patrick Watts' 2012 history of the Stanley Sports Association (SSA), the foreword was written by Princess Anne, who recalled her father Prince Philip's 1957 victory in the now-defunct sailors' race.<sup>62</sup>

Horse racing on the Falklands goes back almost to the founding of the colony itself. The first competition to be referred to as the Governor's Cup was run in 1847, with a trophy donated by Governor Richard Moody. This was not a regular tournament, though, and what would become known as Stanley's annual Christmas Sports – typically starting on Boxing Day – was enshrined by the creation of the SSA in 1908. By 1910, it would become a two-day programme. Aside from the Governor's Cup – an open competition, and the Islands' most prestigious horse race – there were other races differentiated by gender and age of jockeys, distances, first-time horses and jockeys, and patronage and ownership. Increasingly, another category would be created, 'FIB' (Falkland Islands-bred), to reflect the often-superior racing qualities of thoroughbred horses which were increasingly being imported from Chile, and would end up dominating the open competitions.<sup>63</sup> However, even

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<sup>60</sup> Olin Sewall Pettingill Jr, "People and penguins of the faraway Falklands," *National Geographic Magazine*, March 1956, 387-409.

<sup>61</sup> Clive Gammon, "Trout heaven in a bit of hell," *Sports Illustrated*, 3 April 1978.

<sup>62</sup> Princess Anne, "Foreword," in Watts, *The Christmas Sports*.

<sup>63</sup> Watts, *The Christmas Sports*; Watts, 7 December 2017; Edwards, *The Other Side of the Falklands*, 105-07.

imported horses, like FIB horses, were not bred primarily for racing (although owners did consider purchasing them for the racing potential): they were beasts of burden who were used for transport and shepherding.<sup>64</sup> Aside from the horse races, however, there were also events that were collectively referred to as 'gymkhana'. Some of these races involved horseback riding, such as the back-to-front mounted, the relay, the potato race, and challenges with titles like 'Gretna Green' and 'musical chairs'. Some, however, completed the athletic races which formed part of the programme: for instance, the wheelbarrow race (often a mixed-gender affair) and the obligatory tug-of-war.<sup>65</sup> Here, 'gymkhana' was used as less of a test of *military* skill, as it was amongst the British military population in Singapore during the late-nineteenth century, and not as a club in and of itself, as in British-ruled India. In the Falklands, 'gymkhana' was a test of *agricultural* skill, more like ploughing, as seen in agricultural contexts in other parts of the British Empire during the period.<sup>66</sup>

Prior to 1982, very few roads existed outside of Stanley, so travelling from Camp to Stanley for the Christmas sports involved riding one's horse through the countryside – or, by the mid-twentieth century (if one was not riding in the races), an airplane or an increasingly-ubiquitous Land Rover.<sup>67</sup> However, the Darwin Harbour Sports, or the Camp Sports as they are often called, were a large undertaking in their own right, and many of the competitions were reflective of the agricultural prowess and skill sets needed to survive in the harsh Falklands climate and farming environment. Ian Strange, in his 1972 book on the Falkland

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<sup>64</sup> Watts, 7 December 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Watts, *The Christmas Sports*.

<sup>66</sup> Lim and Aman, "Nineteenth-Century Singapore," Cohen, *In the club*; Wilson, "A Manly Art."

<sup>67</sup> Watts, 7 December 2017.

Islands, was not able to note when the first horse race meeting was, but states that by 1875 both Stanley and Goose Green had specific grounds levelled for the purposes of holding them.<sup>68</sup> The Darwin Harbour Sports took place at or near a variety of farming settlements, including Goose Green, San Carlos, North Arm, and Darwin itself. Many of the same contests held at the Stanley sports took place at the Camp Sports, but with added ones such as sheepdog trials, steer riding (both temporary fixtures of the Stanley sports), sheep shearing, and, during the early twentieth century, wrestling, hammer throwing, caber tossing, and even (in the first part of the twentieth century) cricket and rounders.<sup>69</sup> Roger Edwards, an émigré from Hampshire, in his memoir about 1950s Falklands even remembered steer riding as being the most popular spectator event at the Darwin Sports.<sup>70</sup> One 1961 account of the steer riding at the Darwin Harbour gathering, that year held at San Carlos, noted

a shortage of rooftops and other safe places from which spectators could get a good view of the Steer Riding, so most of the onlookers were out in the open with only the corral fence as a refuge, and many an enraged steer, after unseating its rider, would rush among the spectators and scatter them.<sup>71</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, the Darwin Harbour Sports was a tradition of the festive season, but by the mid-1900s that changed: the *Falkland Islands Magazine*, in 1907, stated that ‘inconvenience and unsatisfactoriness of a break in the middle of the season’s work’ had led to ‘a week’s holiday [becoming] an established thing at the end of the shearing’.<sup>72</sup> West Falkland also had its own sports held at the end of shearing season, at Chartres, Hill

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<sup>68</sup> Strange, *The Falkland Islands*, 174.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.; *FIM*, January 1908; *Falkland Islands Weekly News* (henceforth *FIWN*), 7 March 1946.

<sup>70</sup> Edwards, *The Other Side of the Falklands*, 106.

<sup>71</sup> *FIMR*, 7 April 1961.

<sup>72</sup> *FIM*, March 1907.

Cove, Port Howard and other settlements. The 1910 iteration of the West Falkland Sports included donkey racing, spar fighting and a ladies' nail driving competition: the latter in which, according to the *Falkland Islands Magazine*, Mrs John Goodwin failed to reach the final stage of the competition, but 'had the pleasure of watching one of her daughters and two of her daughters-in-law hammer it out amongst themselves'.<sup>73</sup>

In part, horse racing traditions were no doubt imported from Scotland, the West Country, and Ireland, where most original Falklands settlers came from; the main Stanley races in particular were run on a flat course of the kind that would have been common throughout the UK. Some other aspects of horse racing were imported from the UK, but others discarded: betting occurred, but with such a small population, there was no possibility of there ever being a Jockey Club-type organisation that exercised exclusive control over the sport.<sup>74</sup> There were certainly influences from the mother country in terms of the existence of sheepdog trials, but the Falklands sheepdog trial events were far more informal than the complicated hierarchy of codified dog trailing which was enshrined in the UK in 1906 with the formation of the International Sheepdog Society.<sup>75</sup> There may have also been Patagonian influences. The presence in the Falklands of gauchos from Chile and Uruguay during the nineteenth century, most of whom returned to the South American mainland by 1900, was responsible for some of the terminology used by Falklands farmers (for instance, *rebenque* for a horse whip). Some equestrian sports that existed in colonial Chile also share some similarities, albeit without activities which involved animal bloodsport, like

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<sup>73</sup> *FIM*, March 1910.

<sup>74</sup> Vamplew, *The Turf*; Mike Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society*..

<sup>75</sup> Urdank, "British Sheepdog Trials."

bullfighting.<sup>76</sup> Unlike in the Falklands, however, in both Chile and (especially) Argentina, gaucho sport which emphasised agricultural and equine prowess was largely domesticated in cities by the end of the nineteenth century, often under pressure from urban elites themselves, including British émigrés.<sup>77</sup> Rodeo-like activities such as steer riding (certainly popular amongst Argentinean gauchos) rearticulated masculinity for a frontier population; but, unlike, for instance, in early-twentieth century Canada, in the Falklands there was little to no influence from the United States as to the shape of these activities.<sup>78</sup> Uncertain origins make it easier to claim these traditions' uniqueness to the Islands. The Stanley and Darwin Harbour Sports, at least their cultural place and tone, perhaps share similarities with other seasonal physical-cultural spectacles and 'traditions' on the British fringe, such as Orkney's Kirkwall Ba' and Shetland's Up-Helly-Aa, albeit without the rigorously-policed masculinity of either.<sup>79</sup>

In Stanley and (especially) at the longer rural meetings, sociability and courting were key elements of the proceedings. In 1908 at Darwin, a men's 'Married v. Single' cricket match took place, and at the 1912 Darwin proceeding married and single women took each other on at a tug-of-war.<sup>80</sup> 1965's West Falkland Sports at Chartres featured an 80-yard athletic race for married women only, as well as a 100-yard race featuring single women.<sup>81</sup> As well as the sports, there also were the dances. Judged dances in the 'waltz', 'polka', and

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<sup>76</sup> Sudbury, "Falkland Islands English"; Pereira Salas, *Juegos y alegrías coloniales en Chile*, 35-124.

<sup>77</sup> Slatta, "The Demise of the Gaucho."

<sup>78</sup> Kelm, "Manly Contests."

<sup>79</sup> Robertson, *The Kirkwall Ba'*, Brown, *Up-Helly-Aa*.

<sup>80</sup> *FIM*, March 1908; *FIM*, March 1912.

<sup>81</sup> *FIMR*, 5 April 1965.



‘Highland Scottische’ categories were part of the 1912 Darwin meeting.<sup>82</sup> However, dancing, music, and socialising were part of the festivities after the sporting events. Strange noted that dances were popular in the Falklands: during Sports Weeks, at weddings, and at other receptions.<sup>83</sup> Edwards recalled in the 1950s that:

Music for the dances, held in a hastily-converted shearing shed, was provided by many willing musicians playing fiddle, violin and accordion, with Scottish tunes being thumped out hour after hour. Two full nights of Highland Schottische and the Gay Gordons were needed before the dust settled sufficiently to see clearly across the dancefloor.<sup>84</sup>

*The Penguin* newspaper noted that at the 1937 West Falkland Sports at Hill Cove: ‘The dances held throughout the week were floodlit with success: pretty dresses, merry music, a good floor, a gaily decorated hall, and excellent catering gave the Hill Cove Wool Shed the appearance of a fashionable ballroom.’<sup>85</sup> At the 1961 West Falkland Sport at Port Howard, noted by the *Falkland Islands Monthly Review* as having more visitors who drove via Land Rovers than ever before, the paper noted that: ‘The upper storey of the stables was transformed to give a large and very fine dance hall, refreshment room and “Olde Worlde” men’s bar which one felt the Americans would like to buy, dismantle and take to Wyoming.’<sup>86</sup> Dances were late affairs: the last dance at one night of the 1946 Darwin Sports was announced at 4:45am.<sup>87</sup> At the April 1965 North Camp Dog Trials at Salvador, the dance

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<sup>82</sup> *FIM*, March 1912.

<sup>83</sup> Strange, *Falkland Islands*, 174-75.

<sup>84</sup> Edwards, *The Other Side of the Falklands*, 105.

<sup>85</sup> *The Penguin* (henceforth *TP*), 13 March 1937.

<sup>86</sup> *FIMR*, 7 April 1961.

<sup>87</sup> *Falkland Islands Weekly News* (henceforth *FIWN*), 7 March 1946.

(held in a room which was too crowded) began at 9pm, and lasted until 4:45am, and would go onto feature a live rooster making its way onto the dance floor after being auctioned off for charity (notably to contribute to a fund for building a swimming pool which never got built).<sup>88</sup>

The Sports Weeks, in many respects, are notable as being mass participant traditions which involved many people crowding into the structures of the small settlements for whatever sleep they could find. Gammon, in his 1977 *Sports Illustrated* piece, recalled staying at the house of private farm owners/managers Bill and Pat Luxton at Chartres while trout fishing on West Falkland. Pat Luxton noted: 'When we finish shearing we have Sports Week. I've got 29 staying: they'll be sleeping in the kitchen, the bathroom, everywhere.'<sup>89</sup> Watts, who by the 1970s covered the Camp Sports for FIBS (initially by posting a taped report of the day's action back to Stanley), recalls that he would share

a house with thirty or forty people... all sleeping on the floor, wherever you could find somewhere to sleep. Long as you kept your head down somewhere with a pillow and a sleeping bag you were happy... So [after the dances] you went home with a few hours sleep, and you got up and saw whatever was happening the next day.<sup>90</sup>

In Tom Beaty's memoir, there are implied hints of the social hierarchy of these occasions. At West Falkland's sports, married and unmarried men were additionally split into separate sleeping quarters. There would also be a separate house party at the farm manager's

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<sup>88</sup> *FIMR*, 3 May 1965.

<sup>89</sup> Gammon, *Sports Illustrated*, 3 April 1978.

<sup>90</sup> Watts, 7 December 2017.

house.<sup>91</sup> In terms of agricultural classes, then, this was space where different classes intermingled, and the presence of the FIC and its farm managers – and Company-owned horses – often hinted at tensions just beneath the surface. At the 1892 New Year's races at Darwin, the *Falkland Islands Magazine* noted that there 'must have been about 200 people present, most of Falkland Islands Company's employees.' In a period before the event was moved until the end of shearing, the periodical still noted that it essentially acted as a release from a hard work life:

All visitors to Darwin testify to the general good humour and orderliness which reigned throughout this day's annual holiday, looked forward to by all the employees of the Company's Camp as an occasion of pleasant meetings and amusement, which must make a welcome break in their isolated and monotonous lives.<sup>92</sup>

Class itself was not a *major* segregating factor of the sporting events, even if the horses owned by FIC 'servants' would have their own race, such as the two-mile competition at Darwin in 1900.<sup>93</sup> When Governors or FIC officials raced in open competitions, they faced the opportunity of being beaten. The 1919 Governor's Cup champion and FIC manager George Cobb with his horse Alarm succeeded, but a variety of FIC directors and managers were beaten in the many open competitions of 1902 Darwin races, a period where farm affiliations and titles were consistently noted by the *Falkland Islands Magazine*.<sup>94</sup> (Arnold Hodson, as Governor, finished second on his horse Hurstwood in the 'Corinthians' race for FIB horses at the 1927 Stanley Sports.<sup>95</sup>) Nevertheless, the social hierarchy could show itself

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<sup>91</sup> Beaty, *Falkland Islands Interlude*, 28.

<sup>92</sup> *FIM*, January 1892.

<sup>93</sup> *FIM*, February 1900.

<sup>94</sup> Watts, *The Christmas Sports*, 12; *FIM*, March 1902.

<sup>95</sup> Headland, "Sir Arnold Wienholt Hodson."

in how the social events themselves were arranged. One of the star guests of the 1965 Darwin Harbour Sports, held at Goose Green, was noted by the *Falkland Islands Monthly Review* to be FIC Chairman PDL Ainslie, who spent two days at the Sports and rode a horse in the Veterans' Race. He would later present prizes to the winners of the horse racing and gymkhana events.<sup>96</sup>

The Governor's patronage of rifle shooting was echoed in the farm managers' provisions of agricultural sports. The Falkland Islands Company was founded in 1851 via a royal charter; the next year, it purchased large tracts of land previously owned by British-Uruguayan businessperson Samuel Lafone, who had attempted and failed to start a viable cattle-farming business (this area of East Falkland is still referred to as Lafonia).<sup>97</sup> The Company selected and imported from the UK voracious cheviot sheep to graze in the Falklands landscape, and before 1879 handpicked laborers and assisted their passage from England, Ireland, and (mostly) Scotland to work on their East Falkland estates. The FIC was thus the dominant landlord in the Islands, but its shareholders resided back in the UK, leaving local managers with considerable control over their workforces.<sup>98</sup> Without the significant element of a landed tradition or the forced eviction of people, the FIC nevertheless reproduced many of the same dynamics of agriculture that were seen in the Scottish Highlands.<sup>99</sup> 'Class', such as it existed within the Falklands' small population, was divided largely between farm managers and Colonial bureaucrats – the latter of whom almost

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<sup>96</sup> *FIMR*, 5 April 1965.

<sup>97</sup> Royle, "The Falkland Islands," 209-11.

<sup>98</sup> Ellerby, "British interests," 16-22.

<sup>99</sup> Richards, *The Highland Clearances*; Hunter, *Set Adrift Upon the World*.

always came from outside – and other Falkland Islanders. By the time the UK Government in 1976 sent a team led by Labour peer and Rio Tinto Zinc executive Edward Shackleton, the son of Antarctic explorer Ernest, to explore the economic viability of the Islands, the FIC was then owned by Charringtons Industrial Holdings, who had acquired it from Slater Walker Securities in 1973. By the time of Jack's *Sunday Times* report in 1978, the FIC was owned by Coalite.<sup>100</sup> The authors of the first Shackleton Report, in particular the Scottish Highlands and Islands Development Board's (HIDB) Bob Storey, detailed a deeply paternalistic working culture on farms. Recreation was a part of this: it was not funded by the public purse, and community halls were not sufficiently designed and equipped to encourage much beyond what Storey stated might have been 'a whist drive and a film show'.<sup>101</sup> In some respects, then, Stanley's Christmas Sports, and the Darwin Harbour and West Falkland Sports, resemble Highland gatherings, with a social tone that reinforced the employment and land ownership hierarchy, especially as the Sports themselves were ostensibly provided at the behest of the FIC and other farm managers.<sup>102</sup>

When Sarah Allan arrived in the Falklands in 1988, she was initially struck by how few parents took part in sporting activities with their children, a sign not of laziness, but a tradition where recreation was 'organised and overseen' by someone more senior, with 'the mentality that other people will come and organise us'. Allan states that, at the time, most adults did not grow up with much organised sport beyond what was provided, so did not see the need to provide it for their own children. There was traditionally less leisure time

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<sup>100</sup> Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 119-26, 148-54; Jack, 'Don't cry for us Argentina', 14-28.

<sup>101</sup> Shackleton, Storey, and Johnson, "Prospect of the Falkland Islands." See also: Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 148-54.

<sup>102</sup> Jarvie, *Highland Games*.

available as people grew up with less electrical or labour-saving devices: they needed to grow their own vegetables, make their own bread, cut their own peat, and use it for heat. There was more of a tradition of work and self-sufficiency, while children often helped. Thus, she states, organised sport and leisure were not seen as being a part of everyday life.<sup>103</sup> Even if “sport” in an agricultural context was seen as something that occurred only at special, annual occasions, however, it nevertheless highlighted the cultural distinctiveness of the Falklands. It stressed a rugged and industrious self-image for Falkland Islanders which persevered regardless of the FIC’s neglect for its farms and employees; no matters its origins, it ultimately served, arguably even more effectively than rifle shooting, as a means of emphasising a frontier brand of ‘British-ness’. For all that Argentineans, especially the considerable Anglo-Argentinean community in Buenos Aires, believed that Falkland Islanders’ primary cultural ties to ‘British-ness’ had more to do with ancestry, language, and local institutions such as the FIC than it did with who “owned” the Islands, Falkland Islanders’ agricultural sports suggested something very different: a popular-cultural performance of their sovereignty.<sup>104</sup>

### ***Badminton, gender, and ‘expats’***

Badminton’s existence, survival, and occasional thriving in the Falkland Islands – or, perhaps more appropriately, Stanley and (less so) a few of East Falkland’s farm settlements – is symptomatic of winter weather conditions on the Falkland Islands. It was a sport played solely indoors, much like another sport that was arguably as popular within the Falklands: darts. In general, the history of badminton – under-researched as it is in academic

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<sup>103</sup> Allan, 14 February 2018.

<sup>104</sup> Mercau, ‘The Anglo-Argentines and the Falklands’, 159-61.

historiography – is indelibly linked to imperialism: the first sets of rules for the sport, a modernised variation of older games such as shuttlecock and battledore, were written in the late nineteenth century in British-controlled India. When the Badminton Association was born in 1893 in Southsea, Hampshire, it borrowed rules which were originally codified by Britons in India and popularised within the military, before being brought to the UK via retired Army officers.<sup>105</sup> However, the sport's accommodation within the FIDF, whilst significant, alone cannot explain the popularity of badminton, if not always a serious sport, then at least as a popular leisure activity.

Badminton kit itself had been present in the Falkland Islands since at least the end of 1901, when John Summers, secretary of Stanley's Assembly Room, which already had a billiards table, purchased a net, 'bats', and shuttlecocks 'in case the Colonists resident in Stanley wish to start a Club among themselves'.<sup>106</sup> But spotty newspaper coverage hid the true extent of how much it was played. A November 1929 tournament between the FIDF Badminton Club (FIDF BC) and Stanley Badminton Club was treated with great fanfare: *The Penguin* stated that there were a large number of spectators, and Sergeant-Major Allan stated that 'His Excellency the Governor had enquired over the telephone during the course of the tournament as to its progress.'<sup>107</sup> (The FIDF BC had been founded that same year.<sup>108</sup>) When the FIDF BC opposed Stanley BC on one Saturday in August 1933, the FIDF club won what was noted as 'the final of a rubber in which each side had obtained one win' – the

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<sup>105</sup> Guillain, *Badminton*, 31-71. A rare example of academic work on badminton (that deals primarily with southeast Asia) is: Lim and Aman, "Thomas Cup."

<sup>106</sup> *FIM*, December 1901.

<sup>107</sup> *TP*, 2 December 1929

<sup>108</sup> *PN*, 11 June 2010.

other meetings were not previously noted by *The Penguin*.<sup>109</sup> It was certainly a regular occurrence within the FIDF itself: badminton was listed as part of the FIDF's regular training programme on Wednesday and Saturday nights during the austral winter of 1933. In 1937 *The Penguin* noted that the FIDF BC's winter season opened on 13 February, and that badminton was available to play at the FIDF Drill Hall on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights from 8pm.<sup>110</sup>

What was significant about badminton in the Falkland Islands was not just its being based within citizen soldiery. Indeed, unlike rifle shooting or many other sports, it was also one where the Falklands enjoyed rare international recognition as a sovereign polity, beyond imperial/Commonwealth sporting institutions: the Stanley Badminton Club, as the Islands' representative 'governing body', in 1956 started paying annual subs for membership in the International Badminton Federation (IBF).<sup>111</sup> While this was remarkable itself – an honour unlikely to be bestowed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) due to Argentina's opposition – it was its mixed-gender participation, including within the FIDF club, which make it relevant towards examining it in the context of community life on the Islands. As Robert Lake states, 'mixed doubles' features of racquet games had certainly been used before as agents of inter-gender socialisation, most notably lawn tennis, in an increasingly suburban, middle-class

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<sup>109</sup> *TP*, 14 August 1933.

<sup>110</sup> *TP*, 13 May 1933; *TP*, 24 February 1937.

<sup>111</sup> *PN*, 11 June 2010. For instance, re personal papers of Rosemarie King (RK), Letter from Herbert Moreland, Hon Treasurer of the International Badminton Federation (IBF) to WA Etheridge, Secretary of Stanley Badminton Club (SBC), 7 December 1960; Letter from Herbert Moreland, Hon Treasurer of the IBF to WA Etheridge, Secretary of Stanley Badminton Club (SBC), 22 March 1962. Typically, enclosed with the receipt were minutes from the IBF annual general meetings, which Falkland Islands representatives did not typically attend.



West London during the late nineteenth century, where the sport paradoxically became a means by which gender differences were reinforced, rather than overcome.<sup>112</sup>

Badminton's staying power was considerable: while there was a variety of men's- and women's-only doubles tournaments, mixed doubles competitions were also popular in the 1930s. It is significant that women were included in the FIDF's team, whereas they did not serve in the Defence Force itself. During the late 1930s, two FIDF BC secretaries were listed as Mrs E Kelway and Mrs LW Aldridge.<sup>113</sup> Meanwhile, during an October 1935 tournament within the Stanley BC, both daughters of the current Governor, Herbert Henniker-Heaton, were noted as participating with different male partners.<sup>114</sup> And, as with tennis before it, these opportunities for gender mixing were also opportunities to *reinforce* the gender order. In June and July 1936, the FIDF BC held women-only tournaments played 'American-style' (i.e. partners drawn at random), with the losers being forced to provide the members with a 'sausage supper'.<sup>115</sup> The week afterwards, at a club dinner dedicated to husband-and-wife members leaving the Falklands, 'a most enjoyable supper... was purveyed by the lady members of the Club'.<sup>116</sup> Women could hold club offices, but they still made the meals. The many gendered and imperial subtexts of badminton were displayed at one particular wedding which took place on 12 February 1934 at the Christ Church Cathedral (Anglican) in

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<sup>112</sup> Robert J. Lake, "Gender and Etiquette in British Lawn Tennis 1870-1939: A Case Study of 'Mixed Doubles,'" *International Journal of the History of Sport* 29, no. 5 (2012): 691-710.

<sup>113</sup> *TP*, 24 February 1937; *TP*, 19 August 1937.

<sup>114</sup> *TP*, 8 October 1935; Jane Cameron, "Sir Herbert Henniker-Heaton," in Ed. David Tatham, *Dictionary of Falklands Biography*, (self-published, 2008), <https://www.falklandsbiographies.org/biographies/246>, accessed 19 August 2018.

<sup>115</sup> *TP*, 18 June 1936; *TP*, 30 June 1936; *TP*, 2 July 1936.

<sup>116</sup> *TP*, 7 July 1936.

Stanley. Malvina Adelaide 'Molly' Davis and John Turner were noted first and foremost by *The Penguin* as being the Honorary Secretary and Captain respectively of the FIDF BC. Turner's occupation as dental mechanic to the colonial dentist, and Davis's support of the ladies' hockey club (not usually covered by the newspaper), were of secondary importance. At the end of the service, the paper noted that 'the happy couple came out of the church under an arch of badminton racquets formed by members of the FIDF Badminton Club'. Among the guests were acting Governor John Ellis, Colonial Secretary Montague Craigie-Halkett, and the Falklands' top medical officials.<sup>117</sup> Badminton, in this instance, was the means by which many strands of Falklands life and politics came together.

Badminton remained popular in the post-war period as well, so much so that there was increasingly pressure in terms of space and cost. In Stanley, the sole governmental provider of sporting facilities was the Stanley Town Council, and even it operated at a limited capacity. In a 13 September 1955 letter to the Colonial Secretary, the Stanley Badminton Club – which in its current incarnation had existed since 1950 – claimed to have a total of eighty Falkland Islanders as members, in both its 'senior' and 'junior' sections. But Stanley Town Council, in 1955, increased the cost for hiring its gymnasium by 100%, bringing the club's annual spending – including kit – to an unsustainable £160 for that year.<sup>118</sup> The gymnasium was the only *municipal* space in Stanley for indoor sport at that time; the FIDF Drill Hall in theory had a purpose-built court for badminton, but was constrained by what Rosemarie King recalls were 'awful low beams, so you had to learn how not to hit the

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<sup>117</sup> *TP*, 14 February 1934.

<sup>118</sup> RK, Letter from JA Hardy, Chairman of the Stanley Badminton Club (SBC), et al, to the Falkland Islands Colonial Secretary (FICS), 13 September 1955.

beams'.<sup>119</sup> The club pleaded with the Colonial Secretary to help remedy the situation, and appealed to him by emphasising class differences via Stanley's considerable 'expat' (the phrase usually used to describe migrants from the UK) and overseas community, stating that: 'two out of every three persons from overseas and members of Her Majesty's Navy derive a great deal of pleasure from the two evenings per week which we offer them.'<sup>120</sup> Space was still an issue into the 1960s: in 1962, Stanley BC were unable to use the more spacious Stanley Town Hall for their meets, and once again pleaded to the Colonial Secretary for assistance.<sup>121</sup> (A receipt for the club's 1962 IBF subs, written by IBF treasurer Harold Morland, expressed regret that the club were having trouble, and noted that space for badminton was a continual problem in the UK as well.<sup>122</sup>) King notes that expats were, at the very least, crucial in helping to organise and maintain Goose Green's short-lived badminton club, founded in 1959.<sup>123</sup>

Even when discussing in-migration, however, there were hints at a gendered aspect to participation in badminton. In a 1969 interview in the *St Mary's Herald*, a newspaper with a short run printed by Stanley's Roman Catholic church of the same name, one woman originally from Bradford, West Yorkshire was interviewed in the 'We Welcomed' section: she arrived in the Falklands as the wife of a mechanic employed by the Falkland Islands Government Air Service (FIGAS). At the end of the interview, she noted that there were

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<sup>119</sup> Interview with Rosemarie King, Stanley, 6 December 2017.

<sup>120</sup> RK, Letter from JA Hardy, Chairman of SBC, et al, to the FICS, 13 September 1955.

<sup>121</sup> RK, Letter from WA Etheridge, Secretary of SBC, to the FICS, 26 March 1962.

<sup>122</sup> RK, Letter from Herbert Moreland, Hon Treasurer of the IBF to WA Etheridge, Secretary of SBC, 22 March 1962.

<sup>123</sup> King, 6 December 2017.

some surprises to Falklands life, namely because: 'Information particularly for wives coming out here would appear to be practically non-existent.' However, when asked about what she did with her leisure time, she stated that: 'I go to the Whist Drives, I've joined the Badminton Club, I like reading, knitting and experimenting with cooking.' She also admitted that one amenity she missed from the UK was a Sports Shop 'where I could buy a Badminton Racquet.'<sup>124</sup> Badminton here, then, was hinted at as a means of helping 'expat' women – in particular, the wives of skilled workers – maintain a social life far away from home. So, despite badminton offering international acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the Falkland Islands, and a rate of participation that no doubt far outstripped its popularity in the UK, it was nevertheless still utilised far more often as a leisure activity which offered potential social benefits. A May 1951 report on the South Atlantic islands published by the Colonial Office reiterated a dynamic within Stanley's social activities whereby 'small-bore shooting, badminton, and whist drives' were the primary winter sports, while the summer sports of football and rifle shooting were given more column space. As if to acknowledge that popular leisure activities for women and girls were in a weaker position, after enthusiastically extolling the virtues of a local chapter of the Boys' Brigade, the report noted: 'There is as yet no comparable organisation for girls.'<sup>125</sup>

### ***Football and 'international' relationships***

Badminton might have been a rare instance of the Falkland Islands having recognised 'sporting contacts' outside of a British framework, but previous to 1982 it did not take part

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<sup>124</sup> *St Mary's Herald*, 15 May 1969.

<sup>125</sup> Secretary of State for the Colonies, "British Islands in the Southern Hemisphere 1945-1951," Colonial Office, May 1951, 89.

in international badminton tournaments. Falklands football did not have international recognition, but by the post-1945 period it did have a national football squad, which also doubled as Stanley Association Football Club (AFC). The game might have existed before 1900 in the Falkland Islands, but they were not initially football's natural turf: in the UK, at least, football was a game that flourished in cities and industrial towns with access to railway lines. In the rural areas of Britain, the game typically played second fiddle to other sports.<sup>126</sup> One reader of the *Falkland Islands Magazine*, in March 1899, believed, however, that it might have been the ideal game for the Falklands' farmhands: "'Campers' would have something else to talk of besides the hackneyed subjects, 'Horse', 'Cow' and 'Sheep'", they said of football.<sup>127</sup> Eight decades later, as if to confirm that football was not just a Stanley phenomenon, the *Falkland Islands Times*, in October 1978 would feature a rare report on Camp football between Goose Green and Darwin Schools written by the 'Goose Green Supporters Club'.<sup>128</sup>

In practicality, however, it would be Stanley's men who would have easiest access to that most precious footballing commodity: opponents. Stanley AFC was founded in 1913 by Rev. Charles McDonald Hopley, then minister at the Christ Church Cathedral (it was also, when the time allowed, a cricket side). However, by the 1920s, it would again be under the auspices of the FIDF where the majority of football took place: three of its platoons competed against each other in the interwar years, with the best players also being selected as members of the 'national' team, Stanley AFC, whose primary opposition would be ships

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<sup>126</sup> Vamplew, *Pay Up*, 47-50; McDowell, "Rothesay."

<sup>127</sup> *FIM*, March 1899.

<sup>128</sup> *Falkland Islands Times and Monthly Review* (henceforth *FITMR*), 9 October 1978.

of the Royal Navy.<sup>129</sup> Patrick Watts, a 25-year veteran footballer and later manager of the national team, stated that his father and some other men his age initially had trouble getting into football matches because they were not in the FIDF.<sup>130</sup> As reported in a prize-winning essay by eleven-year-old Falkland Islander Marti Barnes in a 1996 issue of the *Falkland Island Journal*, the biggest league which existed on the Falkland Islands was a seven-team one during the Second World War, when elements of the West Yorkshire Regiment, the Royal Scots, and a group of Royal Navy telegraphers were stationed in Stanley and at Moody Brook.<sup>131</sup> The FIDF's grip on local football ended after the war: the Falkland Islands Football League was founded in 1947, and it would eventually have three stable teams – Redsox, Rangers, and Mustangs – that played each other over the course of several decades. The best league players would once again be selected for Stanley AFC to face a rotation of primarily military sides. In the early 1950s, this included the likes of HMS *Superb*, HMS *St Austell Bay*, and the regular patrol boat HMS *Protector*.<sup>132</sup> During one special occasion on 8 January 1957, a Falkland Islands XI faced off against the crew of the royal yacht *Britannia* – a few weeks after Prince Philip's previously mentioned boat race.<sup>133</sup> This was a cycle that continued regularly for many years up until the 1982 invasion. Women's football did exist to some extent, but the game was largely a male preserve. A similar sport-themed wedding to the earlier badminton example occurred on 7 August 1967 at the Christ

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<sup>129</sup> AG Barton, President of the Falkland Islands Football League, "President's Foreword," *Souvenir Football Programme: Falkland Islands XI v. HM Royal Yacht "Britannia", Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1957*, in Marti Barnes (age 11), "The History of Football on the Islands," Winner of the Alastair Cameron History Prize, *Falkland Islands Journal* 249 (1996):12-15.

<sup>130</sup> Watts, 7 December 2017.

<sup>131</sup> Barnes, "History of football," 8-11.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Barton, "President's Foreword," 12-15.

Church Cathedral. This time, however, where a group of Stanley footballers formed a guard of honour for the couple 'holding aloft batons covered with football socks in the colours of the teams', and where a pair of football boots were tied to the back of the bridal car, it was to celebrate *the groom alone's* participation in the local footballing scene. No mention at all was made of the bride's sporting interests in the *Falkland Islands Monthly Review's* report of the wedding.<sup>134</sup> Rosemarie King noted as an aside regarding her participation in the Stanley Badminton Club after leaving school: 'There would have been a good football league [in the Falkland Islands at the time], *but obviously not for me*' (author's emphasis).<sup>135</sup>

After the Second World War, many of the Falkland Islanders were well acquainted with the world of English football, primarily via radio. Pinkerton states with regard to both before and during the Falklands War, radio overwhelmingly filled an informational, organisational, and educational void in this small, sparsely-populated society with no access to television (before 1982, at least) and only semi-regular newspapers.<sup>136</sup> Aside from FIBS, the BBC World Service had a considerable influence in keeping Falkland Islanders informed about sport. In the 1930s, *The Penguin* would list upcoming fixtures in English football, as well as scores from cup matches and the four top leagues (and, to a much lesser extent, Scottish football) based on radio reports.<sup>137</sup> Adverts for RCA Victor Radios were appearing in the *Falkland Islands Weekly News and Church Bulletin* by 1938.<sup>138</sup> The BBC's Empire Service, started in 1932 (later the Overseas and External Services before becoming the World Service

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<sup>134</sup> *FIMR*, 6 September 1965.

<sup>135</sup> King, 6 December 2017.

<sup>136</sup> Pinkerton, "The Falklands Conflict as a Radio War," 344-75.

<sup>137</sup> For instance, *TP*, 20 March 1933 and *TP*, 6 May 1933.

<sup>138</sup> *Falkland Islands Weekly News and Church Bulletin* (henceforth *FIWNCB*), 20 October 1938.

in 1965), may have strived to present a balanced picture of 'Britain' and its regions, but it inevitably reflected 'London' as the centre of the imperial universe, and a specific image of 'Englishness'.<sup>139</sup> Even beyond British colonies such as the Falklands, the BBC Empire/World Service was crucial in helping to sell English football to a multilingual, global audience, and during these decades laid some of the groundwork for its global television popularity from the 1990s onwards.<sup>140</sup> Brian Aldridge recalled going to boarding school at Goose Green from eleven years old during the 1970s, and being told in school that he had to support Manchester United. He was able to follow them on the World Service, and his other friends in Camp would follow their teams. The World Service, he stated, before 1982, was the primary means by which Falkland Islanders would engage with the world of British sport:

We didn't have television. We didn't have newspapers. The only way we could keep track of any sport was on the BBC. The old, crackling BBC. And, if there was a tiddlywinks match on the radio, people would listen to it. And probably 95% of people followed sport of one kind or another – mainly football...<sup>141</sup>

Patrick Watts, meanwhile, became a Preston North End supporter after reading about the exploits of its England-capped multi-positional player Tom Finney. He has continued to follow the Lancashire club despite them not having graced England's top flight since 1960; this includes having made many trips to the club's Deepdale Park ground. Watts additionally states that, in his family and others, allegiance to English football teams was initially a

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<sup>139</sup> Robertson, "BBC versions of Britishness."

<sup>140</sup> Wyllie, Woodward, and Goldblatt, "Tuning in to football on the BBC World Service."

<sup>141</sup> Aldridge, 5 December 2017.



means of keeping connected to 'home', an expression used to describe the UK that has since disappeared completely from Falkland Islands speech.<sup>142</sup>

While men and boys of school age in the Falklands may have been consuming English football at a distance, they still took part in international footballing encounters. Prior to the unilateral imposition by the FIG and the UK Government of a coastal fishing zone 240km around the Falkland Islands in 1986, international boats did not require permits to fish near the Falkland Islands.<sup>143</sup> Before the 1982 conflict, ships would come from all over the world to fish without fear of penalty. Watts recalls several large fishing vessels from the USSR and Poland coming into port in Stanley for various reasons, and normally Stanley AFC would try to arrange a match with them, some of which would end up in the pub afterwards.<sup>144</sup> One of these, no doubt, was the *Akademik Knipovich*, a Soviet fishing research vessel which, in April 1967 played a group of Stanley footballers which included two Royal Marines (and lost 10-2, a match where the Soviet team were noted as having inappropriate footwear meant for basketball).<sup>145</sup> In at least one case in early February 1946, Falkland Islanders took part in an impromptu football match in Puerto Arturo, near Punta Arenas, in the south of Chile. The crew of the *Fitzroy*, a steamer owned by and used for cargo transport by the FIC (which also controlled the Islands' shipping contracts), had come to Puerto Arturo to load timber, and after about half an hour the crew were challenged to a match by the captain of the local football team. The *Fitzroy* were beaten in a match featuring a considerable amount of

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<sup>142</sup> Watts, 7 December 2017.

<sup>143</sup> Royle, "Changes in the Falkland Islands."

<sup>144</sup> Watts, 7 December 2017.

<sup>145</sup> *FIMR*, 1 May 1967; José Luis Torregrosa, "Academik Knipovich." La Fundación Histarmar Accessed 26 August 2018. <https://www.histarmar.com.ar/Antartida/BuquesAntarticos-Logisticos/AkKnipovich.htm>.

spectators, including women and children. After the match came an *asado* organized by the timber company manager whereby 'between four and five pounds of lamb each was provided for each individual, including the children', with the food 'washed down with beer provided by the *Fitzroy*.'<sup>146</sup>

Matches like this against Chilean opposition largely signalled friendship, but they did not necessarily mean recognition for the Falklands as a polity, the kind that was achieved with little fanfare in badminton. If not exactly enthusiastically embracing Argentina's claims of ownership over the Falklands, Chile and Uruguay officially demurred to their larger neighbour's legal opinions, and did not recognise official 'national' squads for the Falkland Islands. The macro-politics were crucial here as well: while previous to 1982 the Falklands were rarely discussed in relation to England's footballing relationship with Argentina, the mutually ugly rhetoric surrounding their encounters – particularly at the 1966 World Cup in England – were known to give British diplomats headaches in their dealings with Argentina.<sup>147</sup> (During and after 1982, the Falklands War came to define these encounters, particularly the 1986 World Cup, famous for Diego Maradona's 'Hand of God' goal.<sup>148</sup>) A match of the kind at Puerto Arturo was impossible for Falkland Islanders in Argentina: for the most part, Falklands men tried to stay out of Argentina as much as possible due to fear of being conscripted into the Argentinean army.<sup>149</sup> Even here, however, there managed to be some kind of minimal sporting relationship, in one case with the Anglo-Argentinean

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<sup>146</sup> *FIWN*, 14 February 1946.

<sup>147</sup> Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 95-113.

<sup>148</sup> Hughson and Moore, "'Hand of God.'"; Ciccone, "Malvinas en México 86." See also Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 8, 172.

<sup>149</sup> Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 118-63.

community based in Buenos Aires. The *Falkland Islands Weekly News and Church Bulletin* noted two football matches in late September and early October 1939 which took place against 'Volunteers' from Buenos Aires: the first against a team from the Royal Navy, the second against Stanley FC.<sup>150</sup> The next day, the Volunteers would change sports, and play the Stanley Ladies Hockey Team; and the week afterwards, they would change sport yet again, and take on the crew of the HMS *Achilles* at rugby union.<sup>151</sup> These 'Volunteers' were members of the Tabaris Highlanders, a group of Anglo-Argentineans who were briefly stationed in Stanley near the end of 1939 to ward off a possible attack by the German Navy. They were only in the Falklands for a short while, and it was rumoured that they were there largely for recreational purposes (in all, 22 of the 33 ended up joining the UK's armed forces). One of their main officers, after all – Corporal Thomas Dawson Sanderson – was a rugby player in Argentina, as were several others.<sup>152</sup> As Ezequiel Mercau states, later Anglo-Argentineans were passionate adherents of sports such as cricket, golf, and polo. However, amongst Falkland Islanders – whom delegations of Anglo-Argentineans visited during the 1982 occupation, in a failed attempt to drum up popular support for the occupation – there was deep antipathy for a group of people who were perceived to enjoy performing rituals of British culture far more than respecting Falkland Islanders' wishes for British sovereignty.<sup>153</sup>

The political relationship with Argentina during the 1970s, however, was beginning to shift in a very different direction. From 1968 up to 1982, both Conservative and Labour UK

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<sup>150</sup> *FIWNCB*, 5 October 1939.

<sup>151</sup> *FIWNCB*, 12 October 1939.

<sup>152</sup> Howat, "Tabaris Highlanders."

<sup>153</sup> Mercau, 'The Anglo-Argentines and the Falklands', 159-61.

Governments, under pressure from the United Nations to accelerate the pace of decolonisation, sought negotiations with Argentina over the future of the Falklands, a position overwhelmingly at odds with public opinion in the Islands themselves. (This was the catalyst for the first Shackleton report: a study intended to assess the viability of the Falklands economy.) A harbinger of the Foreign Office's belief in the inevitability of Argentinean sovereignty was seen in the transfer of the provision of services to Argentinean state corporations: notably, the provision of air travel by the Argentinean Air Force's airline, LADE (*Líneas Aéreas del Estado*) via Comodoro Rivadavia (requiring a 'white card' from Argentinean immigration officials denoting special status for Falkland Islanders), and in 1973 the acquisition of petroleum provision to the Falklands by YPF (*Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales*). Argentina thus had almost complete control over the Falklands' economy; and, during this period, the makings of what is referred to as a 'Falklands lobby' in London was being created to litigate Falkland Islanders' political wishes to stay 'British'.<sup>154</sup> During this period, however, Argentina also, at least publicly, encouraged goodwill towards the Falklands, including opportunities for cultural exchange. An Argentinean cricket team, San Martin, visited the Falklands in December 1973.<sup>155</sup> In terms of Argentina's public relations ambitions, this cultural exchange was seen with a joint donation from the Argentinean Navy and the Secretary of State for Tourism and Sports to the Falklands' Boys Brigade and Youth Club of two Grumete sailboats and four rowboats in April 1974. The Governor, Toby Lewis, was on hand for the ceremony, and praised the gesture as a means of ordinary people building links for peace far better than governments ever could.<sup>156</sup> However, it was a

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<sup>154</sup> Dodds, *Pink Ice*, 118-63.

<sup>155</sup> *FITMR*, November 1973; *FITMR*, January 1974.

<sup>156</sup> *FITMR*, April 1974.

football match against a certain group of Argentineans which occurred in Stanley at some point around 1976 or 1977 which was more reflective of the zeitgeist. A tournament had taken place between Stanley AFC, the Royal Marines stationed in the Islands, and two sets of Argentinean workers based in the Falklands. The final featured Stanley FC against YPF employees. Watts, who played in the game for Stanley, recalled:

There was a group of workers here, building the fuel tanks... And they had 20, 30 maybe more guys here, and they were mostly youngsters – or youngish guys, and they actually produced a football team... and it ended up the final was between the Falklands team and the Argentine YPF team, and I've never seen so many people on the football field that afternoon. It was packed: ten deep on the touchlines, because it really captured the imagination of the population. And, of course, for us, it was a must-win game, and we did pull it off 2-1.<sup>157</sup>

This was a storied victory for the national team of the Falkland Islands, unrecognised as it might have been in Argentina itself. Even in miniature, then, Falklands football represented the geopolitics of the situation. Here, football reemphasised Falkland Islanders' own desire for links with *Britain*, rather than its more coincidental willingness to engage in one of Argentina's much-loved pastimes; even, though, after the match against YPF, Stanley AFC organised a sweepstakes involving potential winners and goal scorers in the 1978 World Cup – held in Argentina.<sup>158</sup> It is perhaps appropriate that Stanley AFC also played HMS *Endurance*, the Falklands' sole patrol boat, one night in late March 1982, when afterwards the ship was called to South Georgia to investigate reports of a landing by Argentinean

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<sup>157</sup> Watts, 7 December 2017. This match is also discussed in Menary, *Outcasts!*, 52-59.

<sup>158</sup> *FIT*, 15 May 1978.

fishermen.<sup>159</sup> These events, of course, precipitated the Argentinean invasion and occupation.

### ***Conclusion***

Sport in the Falkland Islands could never be apolitical, in any sense. The foundation of the colony and its subsequent governance is reflective of broader trends in the British Empire/Commonwealth, but the Islands' location on one of its far-flung (and, on Argentina's side of sea, disputed) frontiers is also reflective of a unique social and political situation within other British settler colonies. In the sense of football's popularity amongst the Islands' male population, there were elements of Falklands sporting culture that would be instantly recognisable to most (urban) Britons. Whilst Falkland Islands men may have consumed football through the BBC's Empire/World Service, there was certainly reciprocation regarding Falkland Islanders using the sport as a means of articulating their relationship with 'home', as well as their South American neighbours. Regional peculiarities, however, also stressed elements of British sporting culture that were typically more latent in the UK. The perceived need of authorities to create a citizen army amongst a small population would mean that rifle shooting had a cultural pre-eminence rarely seen in the mother country, even though its signature Bisley tournament might have been held there. 'Bisley' would thereby become a rare opportunity for the Falkland Islands have points of comparison between itself and other 'British' nations and territories. Furthermore, the Stanley and Darwin Harbour Races – and, with regard to the latter, other similar and related

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<sup>159</sup> Menary, *Outcasts!*, 52-59.

events – at first glance may have reflected a conservative and paternalist work environment, with similar parallels in other corners of Britain and the Empire. However, these tests of agricultural skill, without explicitly doing so, were also occasions for popular patriotism that reiterated self-reliance and an independence nature. If sport reflected demographics and the nature of work along with politics, then it also meant sports such as badminton – a quintessentially British-imperial pastime nevertheless pushed to the fringes of mainstream British sports culture – had an unusual opportunity to thrive in a small society with little ability for outdoor leisure in a brutal winter. Here, badminton also hinted at the gender hierarchy of Falklands society, and in some of the tensions between colonial and civilian authorities. Falkland Islands sporting culture up to the 1982 conflict reflects many of the historiographical themes on sport in the British Empire/Commonwealth, whilst also emphasising crucial differences in how these nuances can be interpreted depending on the specific social and political contexts.

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